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TOWARD FORWARD PRESENCE:

THE U.S. ARMY WESTERN COMMAND EXPANDED RELATIONS PROGRAM

BY

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THE U.S. ARMY WESTERN COMMAND EXPANDED RELATIONS PROGRAM

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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TOWARD FORWARD PRESENCE: THE U.S. ARMY WESTERN COMMAND
EXPANDED RELATIONS PROGRAM

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the last decade the U.S. Army in the Pacific has developed a carefully orchestrated program of exchanges and exercises designed to develop and maintain relationships with the considerable land forces of friends and allies in the region.¹ This program, called the Expanded Relations Program (ERP), provides a vehicle for increasing the visibility and presence of the U.S. Army despite the small number of forward deployed forces in the area. In Europe and elsewhere, the United States has relied on large numbers of forward deployed troops to execute a policy of containment against a perceived world-wide Communist threat. Future cuts in the defense budget, coupled with negotiations for troop reductions in Europe, will result in a smaller, less forward-deployed Army. One of the challenges facing military planners will be maintaining a strong forward presence throughout the world with fewer military units and organizations deployed on foreign soil.² The U.S. Army needs to be able to maximize the influence of the few units and organizations left behind. This paper describes the situation in the Pacific and discusses the U.S. Army Expanded Relations Program now in place. The ERP in the Pacific may provide a model

which will enable a smaller U.S. Army to preserve close relationships with traditional friends and allies in any area of the world despite having fewer forward deployed units.

CHAPTER II

U.S. ARMY IN THE PACIFIC

BACKGROUND

In 1970, at the height of the U.S. commitment to Vietnam, there were over 600 thousand U.S. Army soldiers in the Pacific. In April 1975 the last U.S. helicopter departed the rooftop of the American Embassy in Saigon. Many observers in Southeast Asia and throughout the world viewed this event as the end of American commitment in the region. Other factors influenced the withdrawal of U.S. Army forces in the region. The loss of South Vietnam lessened the requirements for the support bases in the area. The Southeast Asia Treaty Organization became defunct as some countries sought to distance themselves from continued close relationships with the U.S.. For those countries within striking range of the now-dominant Peoples Army of Vietnam (PAVN), continued close relations with the U.S. were seen as undesirable because they might be provocative to the Peoples Republic of Vietnam. Also, newly independent and non-aligned countries were reluctant to have military interactions with one of the superpowers.

The senior Army headquarters in the region had for decades been the United States Army, Pacific (USARPAC) in Honolulu. In 1974 this four-star organization was deactivated. The United States Army CINCPAC Support Group (USACSG), a two-star

headquarters, was formed to serve the needs of the U.S. Commander in Chief, Pacific (USCINCPAC). USACSG addressed Army component issues and supported Army activities in Hawaii. On 23 March 1979 this headquarters was made a three-star command and designated the U.S. Army Western Command (WESTCOM). Five subordinate units were placed under this newly created Major Command (MACOM): the 25th Infantry Division and the 45th Support Group at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii; the U.S. Army Support Command, Hawaii (USASCH) and the U.S. Army Reserve Element at Ft Shafter, Hawaii; and Headquarters, IX Corps (Augmentation), U.S. Army Reserve at Fort DeRussy, Hawaii. These units had previously been under Forces Command in Atlanta.³ In 1989 the 6th Infantry Division (Light) in Alaska was added to WESTCOM as an additional subordinate unit.

One of the primary challenges of Western Command was to re-establish the visibility and influence of the U.S. Army in the enormous area of the Pacific Basin. The increasing economic importance of the region and growth of Soviet presence made this a very significant mission.

U.S. STRATEGIC INTERESTS AND POLICY

Former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger defined the overall U.S. interests and policies in the Pacific in terms of six pillars of U.S. policy in the region: 1) remaining a Pacific power; 2) maintaining a good relationship with Japan; 3) continued stability on the Korean Peninsula; 4) improving relations with the Peoples Republic of China (PRC); 5) supporting

the political and economic vitality of ASEAN (Association of Southeastern Asian Nations) countries and encouraging them towards self defense; and 6) maintaining a close relationship with Australia in the context of ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand and United States).

The United States still has significant treaty responsibilities in the Pacific Command (PACOM) Area of Responsibility (AOR). Five of the seven mutual defense treaties signed by the U.S. are in the Pacific/East Asia region. These treaties involve Japan, the Republic of the Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Australia and New Zealand, and the Kingdom of Thailand.

COMMAND RELATIONSHIPS

The U.S. Commander-in-Chief, Pacific (USCINCPAC) is the PACOM commander. He is a four-star admiral who has operational direction of all U.S. Armed Forces in the Pacific. He is also responsible to the National Command Authority for recommendations for the development of current plans and long term U.S. strategic concepts for his AOR.⁴ PACOM is organized to accomplish the goals and objectives associated with these responsibilities. In addition to WESTCOM, the USCINCPAC has subordinate headquarters for the naval forces component, the CinC, Pacific Fleet (CINCPACFLT), and for the air forces, the CinC, Pacific Air Forces (CINCPACAF). These headquarters are commanded by four-

star general/flag officers. The vastness of the region and certain political considerations have resulted in the existence of three major sub-unified commands within PACOM: U.S. Forces, Korea (USFK), commanded by a four-star Army general; U.S. Forces, Japan (USFJ), commanded by a three-star Air Force general; and the Alaskan Command (ALCOM), commanded by an Air Force three-star general. In addition to his direct command responsibilities, the USCINCPAC is accountable for the operations of the security assistance offices in each of the allied and friendly nations of the region.

Total forces available to the USPACOM during peacetime are considerable. U.S. Marine Corps forces include two Marine Amphibious Forces (MAF) which are Division level organizations and three separate Marine brigades. U.S. Air Force units include one strategic bomber squadron, 11 tactical fighter squadrons, and five tactical support squadrons. Naval Forces include six aircraft carriers with air wings, 89 surface combatants, and 40 attack submarines.

However, since 1974 the forward deployment of U.S. Army combat forces in the region has been limited. One major combat unit, the 2d Infantry Division, is deployed in the Republic of Korea. The mission of this division is to support USCINCPAC's objective of stability on the Peninsula. The 25th Infantry Division (Light) in Hawaii provides highly deployable combat power and serves as the PACOM strategic reserve. The 25th is capable of conducting both contingency and training missions

throughout the region. The 6th Infantry Division (Light) was recently assigned to PACOM; this Division's primary mission is the defense of Alaska and its headquarters is in Anchorage.

WESTCOM, as the Army component to USCINCPAC, is responsible for all U.S. Army activities in the PACOM AOR with the exception of U.S. Army forces on the Korean Peninsula and in Japan. The U.S. Army headquarters in Korea and Japan are separate MACOMs under operational command of the sub-unified commanders mentioned above.⁵ The WESTCOM commander is not the most senior U.S. Army officer in the Pacific. As a result of both domestic and international political considerations the senior U.S. Army officer in the Pacific is the four-star general who, among other duties, is the commander of the Eighth United States Army in Korea. His duties are limited to the Korean Peninsula. The WESTCOM commander is a lieutenant general; this rank disparity has made it difficult to have a clearly defined Army component commander for the PACOM.

CHALLENGES FOR THE ARMY IN THE PACIFIC

The twenty first century has been referred to as the "Pacific Century". Historical trends show a decline since 1950 in the share of world production held by the U.S.S.R., the European Economic Community (EEC), and the U.S..⁶ The meteoric economic rise of the countries in the Pacific region is most notable in Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. However, the progress of the ASEAN trading partners and the emergence of India

as a regional military and political power have also contributed to the shift toward a more multi-polar world. Economic changes have manifested themselves in the development of several large and capable armies in the region. Seven of the ten largest armies in the world are in the PACOM's AOR. The U.S.S.R. has over 400,000 troops in its Pacific Forces⁷; the Peoples Liberation Army of the Peoples Republic of China has 2.1 million men under arms. Nonaligned or hostile countries in the PACOM AOR with the most significant armies include: Peoples Republic of Vietnam with an army of 1.2 million, India with 1.1 million, North Korea with 930 thousand, Taiwan with 270 thousand, Indonesia with 215 thousand, and Malaysia with 105 thousand.⁸ Several allied nations in the region have large armies; most have made great steps in modernizing in the last decade. These include the Republic of Korea with an army of 550 thousand, the Kingdom of Thailand with 283 thousand, and the Republic of the Philippines with 68 thousand. This list does not include all significant armies in the region, but serves to highlight the challenge the U.S. Army faces in supporting U.S. national security interests and objectives in the region in anything but a coalition arrangement.

Preoccupied with the plains of Central Europe, the United States has not fully appreciated how much the armies in the Pacific region have grown in size and capabilities. The ability of many armies in the PACOM AOR to influence geopolitical events is often overlooked. The leadership of many of these armies

often play a role in domestic and international politics. In several nations the army provides the basis of the infrastructure and is important in the process of nation building. These roles for the military are different than in the United States and sometimes make it difficult for U.S. officers to understand how best to deal with their counterparts.

CHAPTER III

IMPLEMENTING U.S. POLICY IN THE PACIFIC

WESTCOM EXPANDED RELATIONS PROGRAM

In the mid-seventies there were virtually no U.S. Army relations with the armies of Pacific. Exceptions were the Republic of Korea and Japan with U.S. Army units deployed in those countries. Limited associations in other countries were generated by the security assistance program. The Expanded Relations Program (ERP) was initiated in December 1977 as a means for the Army, under the operational direction of U.S.PACOM, to support the national strategy for East Asia and the Pacific. U.S. security objectives in the Pacific, as elsewhere, are aimed at helping our friends and allies in the region to develop economically and politically as they defend themselves against encroachment.⁹ As stated in Army Regulation 10-49, the aim of the Expanded Relations Program is to foster army-to-army professional relations with the ground forces of friendly and allied countries in the PACOM AOR. The major thrust of the program was to offset the loss of Army influence and visibility in the region. The scope of the ERP today is a far cry from its humble beginnings. Dedicated efforts on the part of Headquarters, WESTCOM has led to a program which involves interactions with over 30 countries. These activities have become an integral part of the USCINCPAC Peacetime Strategy.

Associations have often originated as staff and senior officer visits followed by the conduct of small staff exercises. Several of these have grown into large scale joint-combined exercises.¹⁰

Successes have taken years to achieve. An example is the Cobra Gold series of exercises between U.S. and Thai armed forces. In 1973 there were 25,000 U.S. servicemen stationed in the Kingdom of Thailand. While most of these troops were involved in the efforts to defeat the North Vietnamese and the insurgents in the South, several thousand troops were active in assisting the Thais in defeating their own communist insurgency. This effort was eventually successful. Other U.S. troops in Thailand were committed to support the efforts of the Central Intelligence Agency to defeat the Pathet Lao in Laos. By 1976 the total number of U.S. Army personnel in Thailand had dropped to only a dozen or so in the U.S. Joint Military Assistance and Advisory Group. The Thai government shunned bilateral military relations with the U.S. despite former cooperation at the political and military levels. In 1984 USPACOM sponsored the first of an ongoing annual exercise in which U.S. Army elements were involved. This exercise, Cobra Gold, has grown into an annual large scale deployment and is an excellent example of the USCINCPAC peacetime strategy of influencing the region through combined and joint activities.

ERP activities include conferences, seminars, senior officer reciprocal visits, staff information exchanges, individual

training, and unilateral and combined unit training below battalion level. A particularly innovative segment of the program has been the Pacific Armies Management Seminar (PAMS). Formulation of the PAMS concept as a fixed feature of the ERP began in late 1977. A series of USACSG initiated seminars on management principles and techniques appeared to be natural way to assist theater military advisory groups and attaches, especially in light of Congressional stress on resource management as a pivotal security assistance theme. The concept was that PAMS would provide a forum at which mid-level officers of allied and friendly armies could exchange ideas and experiences on a selected management theme.¹¹ The seminars are aimed at action officers; however, participants have traditionally included general and senior officers. The location of this annual event has rotated between Honolulu and a site selected by a regional host. Locales have included Bangkok, Auckland, Manila, Seoul, and Sydney. In January, 1990, PAMS was held in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The number of participating countries has grown from nine in 1978 to 26 in 1990; in 1990 Canada, Nepal and India attended for the first time. The seminars have resulted in the development of many interpersonal professional relationships among the officers involved. These relationships may be influential in enhancing cooperation between the armies in the region and furthering stability in the Pacific.

Several ERP activities emphasize tactical and operational interoperability. Army-to-army training involves command post

exercises (CPX). One example is the annual Tiger Balm Exercise with the Armed Forces of Singapore and, in the past, the Armed Forces of New Zealand. Participation includes both active and reserve members from both nations. Three of the four Singapore army divisions are in the reserve forces; thus, U.S. Army personnel are exposed to Singaporeans from all walks of life.

Engineer exercises in the South Pacific islands of Tuvalu, Tonga, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Western Samoa have provided excellent training opportunities for the participating U.S. Army engineering units. These deployments have also been highly successful in terms of U.S. civil-military operations and enhancing of U.S. prestige in the South Pacific. Engineer exercises have also been conducted in the South Asia portion of the AOR on Madagascar, the Comoros Islands and Bangladesh. These are areas to which U.S. Army soldiers had not deployed since WWII.

Pacific Bond, an annual small unit exchange with the Australian Army, involves excellent training opportunities for a U.S. Army infantry company task force in tactics and procedures. As part of the exchange, an Australian company deploys to Hawaii for one month to be integrated into a U.S. Army infantry battalion for tactical training. This exercise has served to provide opportunities for interoperability training under the Australia, Britain, Canada and America (ABCA) agreements.

A mountaineering exercise in India, the largest deployment of U.S. Army troops to the Indian subcontinent since WWII, has

provided outstanding environmental training opportunities for U.S. soldiers. A medical exercise with the Bangladesh Army and a pistol competition in Sri Lanka were the first U.S. Army deployments to those two countries since they gained independence. Exercise Union Pacific has brought a British Gurkha company from Hong Kong to Hawaii each year for interoperability training with the 25th Infantry Division (Light).

U.S. Army officers and noncommissioned officers have attended a number of courses at an assortment of schools throughout the region. These include: the jungle warfare schools in both Brunei and Malaysia, the tracking course in Malaysia, the Singaporean Army Noncommissioned Officers Academy, the Indian Army Small Unit Leader Course, a junior officer weapons course in Bangladesh, and a number of courses in Australia.

A program which complements the ERP is JCS Exercise Program. Many joint-combined exercises have been developed by Headquarters, USCINCPAC; some have been initiated by WESTCOM. USARJ developed Exercise Yama Sakura, a semi-annual corps level CPX involving U.S. units and elements of the Japanese Self Defense Forces (JSDF); WESTCOM units support this CPX as, other than the IX Corps at Camp Zama, there are no U.S. Army tactical headquarters in Japan. Another exercise in Japan is Orient Shield, a division level combined Joint Field Training Exercise (JFTX), which includes participation of a U.S. Army division command post and an infantry brigade (minus). North Wind is an

annual battalion (minus) deployment to Japan for participation in a cold weather training exercise with the JSDF. Other exercises in the region include: Exercise Balikatan, a national level CPX and major JFTX in the Republic of the Philippines each year; a brigade level deployment to Australia for a division level combined JFTX; the annual participation of the 25th ID(L) in the largest JFTX in the free world, Team Spirit; and the deployment of a large headquarters element and a brigade (minus) to the Kingdom of Thailand to participate in Exercise Cobra Gold, a major joint-combined FTX and CPX. Each of these events provides unique opportunities for interoperability and environmental training for U.S. Army units. Additionally, they continue to have a very positive effect on U.S. relationships with participating countries.

INTERNATIONAL MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Expanded Relations Program has taken years to develop and has been enlarged and administered by a staff organization unique to any U.S. Army Major Command (MACOM). The WESTCOM Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff, Operations has within its organization the International Military Affairs (IMA) Division. This organization originated from discussions which took place during the Army Commanders Conference in 1977. There was a need for a focal point for sustaining and extending the U.S. Army's role in Asia and the Pacific. Matters of security assistance and

expanded relations with allied and friendly forces were the primary concern. Actions were needed to help offset the harmful effects of continued U.S. force withdrawals from the area, drastic cuts in strengths and security assistance funds, and terminations of military grant aid. The formation of the Strategy, Policy, International Relations and Security Assistance (SPIRSA) Team was proposed. Realignment within USACSG were to provide the majority of SPIRSA manning. Two additional officer spaces were requested to add regionally specialized depth in security assistance and expanded relations.¹² In 1983 the organization's name was changed to the International Military Affairs Division. This reflected a limited direct involvement in Security Assistance programs and an international orientation. Over the years personnel authorizations for this office were expanded to meet the increasing work load and need for regional expertise. The chief of the IMA division is a foreign area officer (FAO) with the rank of lieutenant colonel. IMA is organized regionally into four areas: South Asia, Southeast Asia, Northeast Asia, and the South Pacific. Each of these areas is the responsibility of one FAO. IMA also has authorized one civilian foreign relations advisor and analyst, one civilian budget analyst, a noncommissioned officer who handles foreign training, an administrative NCO, and two secretaries. Other duties and responsibilities of the division involve interactions with the Army attaches in the region and regional oversight of the 10 U.S. Army FAOs participating in in-country training

programs. In view of the scope and complexity of the Expanded Relations Program and its other responsibilities, the IMA staff is quite modest. Recently the IMA authorization under the Officer Distribution Plan has been reduced from seven officers to three. This represents not only a decrease in spaces but also a loss of regional expertise that will not lend itself to quick fixes by personnel officers. This low cost, high payoff operation will be crippled by this reduction in its personnel strength.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

EXPANDED RELATIONS PROGRAM: SUPPORT OF NATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The work that has been done by WESTCOM over the last 12 years to further the influence of the U.S. Army throughout the PACOM AOR has been instrumental in turning around a situation in which the Army's credibility in the region was at a low point. Successes have been achieved because of the vision of several WESTCOM commanders. This foresight has involved the clear understanding of how the Army could best support the objectives of the CINC in the Pacific. It has required more than the innovative use of limited resources and the patient cultivation of personal and professional relationships to enhance our presence in the region. Army leaders have had to have a full understanding that the dimensions of military power are not limited to combat power. While the Army has been criticized for having what has been described as "the Fulda Gap" mentality, some senior officers have understood the various dimensions of military power. These include military civic action, the expansion of infrastructure of developing nations in promoting stability, the need for combined operations, and the importance of good personal relations with friends and allies. Fortunately several of the senior officers assigned to the Pacific have been able to understand the political, social, and economic

implications of power as well as the raw combat power. These commanders have quietly set about recapturing, to some extent, the influence of the U.S. Army in the Pacific. Some subordinate commanders have expressed difficulty in understanding the importance of deployments and other activities supporting the ERP. The hosting of foreign visitors or the deployment of a unit to an exotic country might not easily fit into the normal mission essential task list (METL) for an infantry battalion. Most commanders, however, have had the ability to use the program to enhance the training of their units. Readiness has been enhanced through training in deployment skills, through environmental training in possible contingency areas, as well as through combined and joint operations. Additionally, these activities have generally served as outstanding recruiting and retention tools.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS

FORWARD PRESENCE: THE WESTCOM PACIFIC MODEL

With the approach of the twenty-first century, the leadership of the United States Army must define missions and responsibilities for tomorrow's Army. Several factors make this effort one of the most momentous ever undertaken by the U.S. Army. These include the prospect of declining force structure, diminishing resources and changing national attitudes toward defense which will certainly result in fewer forces stationed abroad. However, the changing world situation, including a highly volatile Eastern Europe, a growing multi-polarity in a world which has been divided along East-West lines for almost 50 years and the large armies of some Third World countries in possession of high technology weapons necessitate continued U.S. influence in maintaining stability.

As the Army grapples with the issue of maintaining a forward presence with a diminishing forward deployment, it must consider how it can best influence military events in regions in which there are few U.S. soldiers on the ground. Those concerned with the missions, goals, and responsibilities of the Army in the twenty-first century may find it useful to look at the Pacific for a model to develop a cost-effective, realistic program that will result in the ability to continue to be a major player throughout the free world.

ENDNOTES

1. The U.S. Pacific Command area of responsibility encompasses the area bounded on the east by the Americas at the shore of the Pacific Ocean (including the mainland Alaska and the Aleutians) and on the West by the East Coast of Africa. Major subregions include: Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, Australia and New Zealand, the South Pacific and South Asia/Indian Ocean areas.

2. National Security Strategy of the United States, The White House, March 1990, pp. 25-26.

3. Annual Historical Review, United States Army CINCPAC Support Group, 1 January-31 December 1978, p. 5.

4. Doctrine for Unified and Joint Operation (Test Pub.) Joint Chiefs of Staff Publication (JCS Pub) 3-0, The Joint Chiefs of Staff, Washington: January 1990, pp. 1-8.

5. It should be noted that there is a re-examination of the Army command relationships in the Pacific; WESTCOM may again become USARPAC with Japan added to its AOR.

6. Karl Eulenstein, US PACOM Strategy for the Year 2010, Draft, 11 October 1989, p. 8.

7. "The Forgotten Far East," U.S. News and World Report, 23 April 1990, pp. 32-33.

8. The Association of the United States Army, Special Report: 1989, End of a Decade-End of an Era. A Global Assessment, pp. 36-46.

9. National Security Strategy of the United States, The White House, 1988, p. 31.

10. Joint-combined exercises involve two or more services of two or more countries.

11. The Annual Historical Review, USACSG, 1 January-31 December 1978, p. 17.

12. The Annual Historical Review, USACSG, 1 January-31 December 1978, p. 5.

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6. The Association of the United States Army. Special Report: 1989, End of a Decade - End of an Era, A Global Assessment. Arlington: 1989.
7. "The Forgotten Far East." U.S. News and World Report, Vol. 108, 23 April 1990, pp. 32-33.